Westward

NEWTON, A. EDWARD

HV 1624
K45
N481

M.C. MIGEL LIBRARY
AMERICAN PRINTING
HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

HV1624
K45
N481

Atlantic Monthly
May 1932

WESTWARD

BY A. EDWARD NEWTON

I

With characteristic indirection we began our course westward by going south. A charming lady, a daughter of Virginia, had been induced by someone in Richmond 'to ask Mr. Newton if he would deliver a lecture there, on any subject which pleased him'; such profits as might arise were to go to the 'unemployed.' My usual terms — smiles and tea — being immediately agreed to, we journeyed to the one-time Capital of the Confederacy and were most graciously received. I would not seem to boast of the F. F. V.'s who did me honor, of luncheons here and dinners there, or of the many juleps I first sniffed, then tasted, and then, like Oliver Twist, asked for more.

I was particularly pleased to renew my acquaintance with Ellen Glasgow, whose novel, *The Romantic Comedians*, should be read by every man of middle age who is thinking of getting married and who feels that the laws of nature have been suspended in his behalf. At her house I met James Branch Cabell, the author of the famous *Jurgen*, of which I have two copies, both unread — one, a first edition with a dust wrapper, and the other, the beautifully illustrated edition published by John Lane. I was able to tell him a story which amused him greatly. A Richmond girl, who several years ago married a Philadelphian, confided to me, one evening at dinner, that only recently had Richmond indulged itself in a real, honest-to-God public library. I expressed my astonishment and said, 'What did you do when you wanted to know anything?' 'Oh,' was the reply, 'we did n't want to know very much, and, if we did, we just called Mr. Cabell up on the phone.' Now that is what I call being real neighborly.

Our visits to Brandon and Shirley and Westover, and several others, were delightful, but the beauties of these famous houses on the James River need no description from me. They bespeak a civilization that is gone forever, and with it much that is beautiful. I have long since given over the wish I once had of living in an historic house, a house in which history — literary, social, or political — has been made. Now, fully convinced of the importance of a man to himself and to no other, what history I cannot make for myself I do without. But old places where things happened, 'where the lightning once came down,' as Le Gallienne has it, have always interested me enormously. When I hear of these historic places passing into alien hands, I feel sad, indignant, or amused, as the case may be. What right has a rich New Yorker to take Warwick Castle, say, for the summer? A developed sense of humor would protect him from such a blunder.

Of Jamestown, the first English settlement in America, founded in 1607 by Captain John Smith, but little

remains. The tower of the church in which Pocahontas was married to John Rolfe — so the legend goes — and a few tombstones did not detain us long, but Williamsburg, the ancient capital of Virginia, is different. It is a lovely old place owing its chief distinction to the College of William and Mary, which almost ties with Harvard as being the oldest institution of learning in the United States. The original buildings, which are very fine, are said to have been erected from plans by Sir Christopher Wren. Williamsburg is a place of such peace as has to be sought for these days. It is, practically, just one long street, the Duke of Gloucester Street, which runs for a mile or more in a straight line from the campus, in the centre of which is a quaint old statue of an early colonial governor, Lord Botetourt.

The college has been the Alma Mater of governors without end and three Presidents of the United States, but it is chiefly fortunate in having attracted, some few years ago, the attention of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who decided to buy up and re-create not only the college, but, in effect, the whole town. The work was reverently and vigorously undertaken. Some of the buildings which were falling into decay — for the college was not adequately endowed — were pulled down and reërected, as much as possible out of old materials. The result is delightful: a new-old village has arisen; nothing has been changed, not a false note has been introduced, but the college and the town have been given a new lease of life. Millions have been and are being spent — judiciously.

It seems that wherever I go in my travels Mr. Rockefeller has just preceded me, writing his name as one who loves his fellow men. And not upon the college buildings alone, for the fine old courthouse, the parish church, — famous in the annals of Virginia, — the blacksmith's and many other shops, the inn, even the prison for 'poor debtors,' have been torn down and reconstructed. Perhaps Mr. Rockefeller is providing a home for himself in his indigent old age. I hope he may be happy in it — he deserves to be. What other man since the world began has been so universal a philanthropist? It may be said that no man should be permitted to accumulate so colossal a fortune as his; in the future it will be more difficult, — I hope impossible, — but he did not make the times in which he lives, and, recognizing his responsibilities, he has done what he can to ameliorate them.

At the risk of wearing out our welcome we would have stayed longer in Richmond, but we were tied to an hour. My 'lecture' was well attended; there were no serious casualties, and immediately it was over we were motored to the railway station and entrained for Philadelphia, which we reached early next morning. To go while the going is good is an excellent habit; I govern myself with few rules, but this is one of them. As my old friend, Hawley McLanahan, used to say, 'There is one thing I like about the Newtons: when they say they are going, they do not disappoint you.'

II

We had heard California calling us for years, and at last had decided to heed its call. The idea was to follow the course of the empire in early February and March, there being too much weather in these months in Eastern latitudes — but things happened. In the first place, Helen Keller was to receive an honorary degree from Temple University (curiously enough, the achievements of this amazingly accomplished and useful woman had never before been so recognized) and I had

been asked to present her — an honor which carried with it the privilege of entertaining her for a day or two. What I feared might possibly be an inconvenience turned out to be a delight which will long be remembered.

In a census of living Americans distinguished above their fellows, conducted, as I remember, by the *New York Times*, there were five men in the second rank and only two names, Thomas A. Edison and Helen Keller, in the first. Miss Keller has been called, and I think with truth, the most wonderful woman in the world. Many guests have been entertained at Oak Knoll, but none of such distinction as Helen Keller. So amazing is her personality that in two minutes one forgets that she has neither sight nor hearing nor speech — for her speech has to be translated. But she is so agreeable, so gay, and she looks at one so frankly with her great blue eyes, her mouth is so expressive and such a beautiful soul is revealed by her smile, that one forgets her great afflictions and instantly becomes her slave. This was the effect she had upon Alexander Graham Bell, Mark Twain, and Professor Einstein; this was the effect she had upon every member of our household.

I have said that I stayed home from California to present her for an honorary degree conferred by Temple University. Upon the platform to receive a degree at the same time was the governor of the state, Mr. Pinchot, seated by the president of Temple, Dr. Beury. The mayor of the city was to present the governor. Dr. Beury, in his introductory remarks, felt called upon to speak, chiefly, about Helen Keller. When the governor was presented for his degree by the mayor he was buttered, *ad nauseam*, by his orator, who then turned his attention to Helen Keller. The governor, in accepting the degree, said it was an honor to receive a degree at the same time as Helen Keller. Finally, when my time came to present Helen Keller, everything had been said. So I began by informing the audience that the three miscreants who had spoken before me had stolen my act and had been clumsy with it.

'Now,' said I, 'if you wish to hear Helen Keller's accomplishments eloquently presented, listen' — and I went on to repeat what had already been said. But I went further. It had originally been suggested that Miss Keller's teacher, Miss Sullivan (who later became Mrs. Macy), should also receive a degree, but she had declined the honor; she said she was not worthy, did not wish to seem to detract in any way from the recognition of her pupil. She was reasoned with, but remained firm. She would not even come to Philadelphia. Polly Thomson, Helen Keller's secretary, would accompany her. I told of Mrs. Macy's obduracy. I said, and truthfully, that her pupil had had the urge to break out of the dark into the light, whereas the teacher had voluntarily entered the dark in the hope of dissipating it for the pupil; that Mrs. Macy had taught herself much in order that Helen Keller might learn more, and that it was Temple's good fortune to recognize the greatness of both women; in a word, that the English, French, German, Greek, Latin, mathematics, philosophy — all that Helen Keller knew and was, she owed to Mrs. Macy. And, I continued, occasionally one settles important matters by voting upon them, and I asked that all who agreed with me that a degree should be conferred upon Mrs. Macy, by force if necessary, should signify the wish by standing.

The immense audience rose as one man — all but one woman: Mrs. Macy herself remained seated, with tears of happiness rolling down her face. Polly Thomson had spotted her in the

audience. Neither Polly nor Helen nor anyone else knew that she had come over, alone, from New York to see her pupil honored. She certainly disproved the old adage that listeners never hear any good of themselves. Next year Mrs. Macy will accept a degree; we shall have another party. I am already looking forward to it.

I cannot bear to leave this subject. Delightful Polly Thomson, Miss Keller's secretary, travels with her everywhere. She talks into Helen's hand and Helen into hers as fast as I can dictate a letter. They can also read each other's lips. Between them they can do anything. It is well known that a person deprived of one set of faculties has others abnormally developed; especially is this the case with Helen Keller. She enjoys music through vibrations. As she walks through a garden she can name the flowers on either side from their perfume. I walked with her through a conservatory; by chance she touched a flower. 'Ah,' she said, 'the parrot plant!' It was; I had never heard of it before. We went to a dinner; after we were seated someone asked her how many people were at the table. 'How should I know?' she replied with a smile. 'I have met twenty.' We were a party of twenty-two; two people had not been presented to her.[1]

After Helen's party was over, there remained but one — two other things to keep me in Philadelphia. On the twenty-third of April,[2] three hundred and sixty-eight years ago, one Mary Arden, in Stratford-on-Avon, was brought to bed of a boy. This boy turned out to be no less a person than the greatest of the sons of men, William Shakespeare. It is obligatory under the last will and testament of Edwin Forrest, America's greatest tragedian, to celebrate the birthday of Shakespeare in a fitting manner at the Edwin Forrest Home for superannuated actors and actresses. In these celebrations I was seriously implicated. Moreover, there was to be a dinner given to the Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia by Edgar Scott on the evening of that same day; Edgar being one of our baby members, the rest of us being mostly old codgers who, while suspecting, unreasonably perhaps, his knowledge of 'The Bard,' were willing — nay, eager — to show our confidence in his ability to give us a dinner 'fit to ask a man to,' as Dr. Johnson once said. And here and now 'I'll tell the world' (*Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 4) that this confidence was not misplaced.

One of our members, the Honorable James M. Beck, the eminent lawyer and orator, who has denied himself the pleasure of scholarly retirement for the sake of representing a thankless Philadelphia in Congress, came up from Washington to add lustre to the occasion. I suppose the fact is that he was glad to absent himself for a few hours from the petty squabbles which make up the life of our politicians in the Capital City. It was a delightful occasion. Finally and at last, all my little chores were cleaned up, and on April 24, 1931, we started westward.

III

Our first stop was Chicago. John Ruskin, whom I never much loved, says somewhere that railway traveling is really not traveling at all: it is merely being sent to a place, and very little different from becoming a parcel. I had occasion to think of this remark several times as we were speeding over some of the most uninteresting landscape in the world, in that section of these United States called the Middle West. I could not get through this part of my journey fast enough. English

[1] Mr. Newton's mathematics are his own.

[2] The traditional date. — Editor

writers on our country say, if one would know what the United States are (they should say *is*, but they don't), the thing to do is not to bother about New York or Boston or Chicago or San Francisco, but to go into the Middle West and travel and live on four dollars a day. They are quite right, of course, but, good heavens, what conclusions they will reach!

I met a woman on a train who told me, — as who should say, 'Match this for enterprise in the East if you can!' — 'There is scarcely a town in the Middle West that has not its civic centre!' And there are people who do not like their portraits painted with the warts, who do not think that Sinclair Lewis deserved the Nobel award. Main Street has two sides, a shady and a sunny side. He has painted only the shady side, you say? I find that he has, in all his books, painted us as we are. If we don't like his portraits, let us change ourselves. *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Dodsworth*, and *Elmer Gantry* are not greatly written, perhaps, but when this generation gets through with them they will be regarded as exact chronicles of the time, if not abstract and brief. How like Sharon (in *Elmer Gantry*) is 'Sister Aimee McPherson' of Angelus Temple in Los Angeles! Think of Al Capone. No novelist would dare to create such characters; they are the product of what we call our civilization. Someone, a year or two ago, published a book which had for title *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*. The answer is clear — most of us don't.

Chicago is what it is — the most wonderful city in the world. That I don't wish to live there is nothing to the point. I remember Chicago when I first saw it, just after the fire; very few buildings were standing and high board hoardings enclosed great masses of smouldering ruins. At intervals in these fences were wickets toward which long lines of dejected men and women were headed, patiently awaiting their turn for small tin buckets of hot coffee and such provisions as could be secured and dispensed. That was the time to buy land; it could then be had as cheap as stinking mackerel. And now look at it! One does not expect all its streets and boulevards to be superb, as Michigan Avenue is, the wonder boulevard of the world.

The difficulty in making comparisons is that people too often do not compare like with like. Chicago has its many square miles of dirty, sordid, wretched houses and miserable shops, tenements which are a disgrace — and we have them in New York and Philadelphia, in all our large cities. London has cleaned itself up amazingly in the last twenty years, but Liverpool is awful, and Glasgow is worse. Berlin has, I believe, been built without slums. But I'm for Chicago — with reservations. I am like a little boy I once knew, the son of an old friend. For some reason or other the lad, of perhaps nine, was sent to the Far West to spend his summer on a ranch. On his way he stopped for a few hours in Chicago, just long enough to write his parents a post card, on which he said, laconically, 'Since I have seen Chicago it has rose in my estimation.' How typical of the self-satisfied Philadelphian, 'corrupt and contented,' as was once said of us — and with reason.

Philadelphia, on a low-lying spit of land between two rivers, has little to recommend it except its suburbs, which are beautiful, accessible, and salubrious. And with the advent of the motor car everyone lives out of town except a few hardened souls who prefer dirt and noise to quiet and fresh air. This leaves our city to the 'racketeers.' We are robbed unconscionably; no mayor of our town in recent years — except my old friend Ned Stuart, who

kept a famous bookstore, Leary's — but has gone out of office unwept, unhonored, and unsung. But I forget the reformer, 'Hampy' Moore, who has just been elected mayor a second time after an interregnum of twelve years, a most unusual honor. He is at least honest, but the politicians will tie his hands if they can, in accordance with their habit. But I was speaking of Chicago.

IV

Chicago has, indeed, 'rose' — rose right out of a swamp or marsh at the bottom of Lake Michigan. What a city it is! And its people, millions of them, a mass of nervous energy! That is their chief trouble — they have no repose. They want a wide and magnificent boulevard, and pump it out of the bottom of a lake. They take an open sewer which sluggishly flows into the lake, grandly call it a river, pick it up and turn it around and make it flow into the Gulf of Mexico, via the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

This was not done without expense and litigation, for the level of the water in the lake was lowered appreciably, it is said, and other states and Canada objected. But it was done. And the buildings upon the lake front are among the finest in the world: colossal, magnificent structures, temples reaching into the heavens, given over to worship, — nowhere in the world more intense, — the worship of the almighty Dollar. Skyscrapers are a necessary evil in New York, where there are more people than there are square feet of land, but Chicago, having the whole State of Illinois to extend into, did not need them. However, the fashion of tall buildings was set, and one might as well be out of the world as out of fashion.

I have never visited one of the most famous sights of Chicago, the stockyards, nor have I any wish to do so. I should, however, like to ask Mr. Armour or Mr. Swift or Mr. — whoever might tell me — why it is that one cannot, out of our immense supply of meat, get a good cut of roast beef, or a succulent piece of lamb, or a tender ham, or a crisp rasher of bacon, such as one can get almost anywhere in England. It is 'mass production,' I suppose; I wish it were otherwise.

We lunched gayly with some friends who tore themselves asunder to entertain us at the Tavern Club, situated on the top of one of the tallest buildings, and dined sumptuously at the Drake, one of the best hotels in the country. We were unlucky enough to miss our friends, Mr.[3] and Mrs. Julius Rosenwald, whom it is a privilege to know; and the Walter Strongs, who had visited us at Oak Knoll only a few weeks before, were also away. Who could have supposed that that able and public-spirited man, the owner of the *Chicago Daily News*, in the prime of life and seemingly in robust health, would have passed away before we returned home? He leaves his family a fine inheritance — a noble name.

But the Martin Schwabs, upon whom we dropped unexpectedly, received us cordially. Schwab's office (he is a consulting electrical engineer by profession) might well be mistaken for that of the custodian of some great archæological museum, so filled it is with rare specimens of Chinese art.

After a few friends had been asked to meet us at luncheon, we were immediately taken to the newly opened Planetarium, a gift to the city from Mr. Max Adler. The building that houses this amazing astronomical device — the operation of which I wish I were learned enough to describe — has just been erected on a site that has been pumped out of the lake. The Planetarium was operated and explained to

[3] This great lover of humanity is gone. — EDITOR

us by Professor Philip Fox, an astronomer in whose keeping it is, and I told him that I found his explanation much more lucid than the one to which I had before listened, given in very choice Italian in Rome several years ago.

The University of Pennsylvania was, some time ago, offered one of these amazing contrivances by which the motions of the stars and planets in the heavens during the course of a year can be reproduced or suggested in the course of an hour, but the acceptance of the offer was for some reason so long delayed that it was withdrawn, and, according to the last report, the instrument is to be installed in the new Franklin Memorial Building soon to be erected, largely by the gifts and energy of my old boss, Cyrus H. K. Curtis, who has done so much for Philadelphia. Our most public-spirited men come to us; they are not of native birth. Franklin, Girard, Curtis, are names which immediately come to mind.

V

Two nights and a day on a train, practically without a stop. Verily, as John Ruskin said, I felt like a parcel marked SPECIAL DELIVERY — RUSH. The while, what I am pleased to call my mind played with an idea which I should like to put into effect, and which, if effected, would certainly produce WAR. But it would not be for more than a few minutes, and the United States would be the better for it. I should like to say to the citizens of Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, and perhaps several other 'backward states': 'Either relinquish your privilege of selecting two Senators each or get out of the Union. You may, if you elect to stay in, have among you one Senator, provided he promises to be seen but not often heard.' The idea that a group of six so-called states, with a total population of only 2,700,000, the least populated area in the whole civilized world, should each of them speak with as much authority as the great states of New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, and others, is ridiculous. What good are they — to themselves or anyone else? What do they produce? What taxes do they pay?

Take Idaho, Senator Borah's state, from which we hear so much. It contributes in Federal taxes $868,000, against New York's $928,000,000, Illinois's $247,000,000, and Pennsylvania's $230,000,000. The population of Nevada is 91,000. This state — it might be called a state of mind rather than a state — has as much weight in the Senate as New York, which has in its metropolitan area a population of over 10,000,000, and Pennsylvania, whose population is just under that figure. And what does Nevada produce? A little silver and copper, — of which we have more than enough, — cactus, rattlesnakes, and Reno divorces which are a national scandal.

I have taken my figures from an address delivered by the Honorable James M. Beck at the Union League in Philadelphia, but the conclusions, I hasten to say, are my own. The matter is a serious one. A politician, with a reputation to lose, would shrink from saying 'Turn the rascals out,' but I am oppressed by no such difficulty. I know, of course, how these 'backward states' got into the Union. I know why the territory of Dakota was split into two states, as do you also, Reader. I do not deny that both North and South Dakota are enormous areas, and I do not forget that Delaware, and Rhode Island too, have the same representation as have the larger states; but these states, though small, have enough intelligence to pull their weight. These miserable Western

states have nothing, and they are a drain upon the entire country.[4]

Such were my thoughts — if so I may call them — as I looked out of my car window at endless miles of dry, arid land. One gets up in the morning and looks out of one's window at the landscape. Six hours later one is, seemingly, in exactly the same place, and it has changed little at bedtime or next morning. But when it does, then it is glorious. There could not possibly be better preparation for the Grand Canyon than the country one passes through to reach it. But we are not there yet.

I am so constituted that I can read for hours on end in my library, but to read all day long on a train is fatiguing; so, after a time, I put my book aside and began to muse (I prefer this word 'muse' to 'think,' for thinking implies labor and I am not good at it). 'Whither are we going?' I mused. I knew that *we* were going to Santa Fe — but this nation, of which I am so small, so insignificant a unit, whither is it going?

I know nothing of Russia, — who does? — but, Russia aside, where else in the world can one travel for days and see nothing new, nothing strange? The same faces, the same ugly, disorderly towns, the same deadly monotony of landscape. The inheritors of a continent of practically unscratched resources, what have we done with it? Are we, as I suspect, a nation of grafters and killjoys? Working like the very devil, for what? To get to the end of our lives without having lived a single minute. Was it to build up such a nation as this that our ancestors (not mine — mine were on the other side) fought the English and the Hessians a hundred and fifty years ago, and, with the invaluable aid of the French, won our freedom?

Freedom, forsooth! There are a thousand small towns and cities — to mention one would be invidious — in which no man in his sober senses would live if he could help it, if he knew any better. Of recreation we know nothing; golf is for the few — it is a rich man's game. A few boys play baseball, but more prefer to see it played, and not one man in ten thousand could make a home run without dropping dead. We do not know how to sing, and walking against the noise of a saxophone is not dancing. We are a nation without legend or folklore, without the quaint and homely sayings which illuminate conversation. I have seen husbands and wives sitting opposite one another for hours without opening their mouths except to yawn.

Three things only interest us: Business, which has largely passed into the hands of a group of men who confess and call themselves bankers, against whom the individual has no chance whatever; and Religion, which in the Catholic Church, the only one that takes it seriously, is a form of politics, and in the Methodist is a form of intolerance out of which that great evil, Prohibition, has sprung. This is the sum. Look where one will, the blight that calls itself Prohibition stares one in the face. As we rolled through the endless wheat fields of the Middle West, I thought of the ignorant farmers wondering why Europe refuses to take her wheat from us if she can buy it elsewhere. The great vineyards of France and Italy produce what is just as much a staple to them as wheat is to us. We shut our doors upon their wine and think it strange that they will not take our wheat and cotton. When will our politicians have the courage to tell us the truth, or, better still, when shall we have the intelligence to think for ourselves?

We, a crime-swept nation, deserve

[4] Possibly some of us who have lived in these miserable Western states may harbor other opinions of them. — EDITOR

the scorn in which we are held in Europe. What is our chief contribution to the world? *Democracy*, that horrid farce which thoughtful men fear. How curious it is that the only nation in which, by an election, a proper person may possibly be elected to high office — England — should still be governed, at least nominally, by a king!

The operations of democracy are everywhere the same: men without experience or knowledge are placed by the mob in positions of responsibility and power — only the ignorant need apply. Hence the mess in which the world finds itself. As I think of the history of my country I find a steady deterioration, in civic, state, and national government alike. It used to be said that the Presidency was an office which should not be sought and which could not be declined. In the light of present-day politics such an aphorism makes one smile: it is too naïve. The founders of our country were, almost to a man, men of education, not infrequently men of ideals. When I was a boy one knew the names of many of the men in our Senate and had an idea, at least, of what they stood for; the office was an honorable one. In order to make the Senator more immediately responsible to the will of the people, the selection was taken out of the hands of a group who could at least read and write and given to that great beast — the mob. Only one small group of men, the Supreme Court, stands before the world as respectable. When that goes, we all go. And what reason have we to suppose that it will escape the general trend?

VI

From these musings I was interrupted by my wife, telling me it was time for lunch. We were on a famous train on a great railway, renowned, as we had been told, for its luxury, speed, and safety — or perhaps I have stated these important items in reverse order. But at the thought of that dining car I shuddered. That the meal would be expensive I knew; that it would be eatable I doubted. Soup! Bought by the hogshead, warmth and wetness its chief characteristics. I could see and taste it in imagination. Meat and vegetables! The art of dining was dealt a body blow when dining-car chefs discovered the wonderful possibilities which lurked in what they call 'minute steak' — which, with fried potatoes, would cost a dollar and a quarter. Bread was an extra, as was a slab of pie 'baked on the train' — as if that were a recommendation! And for forty cents a bottle of ginger ale could be secured, but it was sold upon the distinct understanding that it was not to be mixed with anything to drink which was contrary to the law of the state through which we were traveling, and the United States! Subsequently I found a sign to the same effect in my room at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. 'Freedom' has become with us a mere tradition.

I wonder how many of my readers remember the Raines law sandwiches which, twenty or thirty years ago, we used to have to buy when, under certain conditions, we wanted to get a glass of beer in New York. Few made any pretense of eating these sandwiches; indeed, they were not intended to be eaten: they were merely served to comply with the law which said that drink could only be served with food. They were served time and again, until they were worn-out in service and discarded. Indeed, I think toward the last something resembling a sandwich in appearance, but indestructible, was invented, and this I prophesy and hope will be the fate of the 'minute steak.' It generally consists of a small piece of

tough meat which has been parboiled and subsequently fried or grilled and put away; under favorable conditions it will keep indefinitely. When an order reaches the kitchen for one of these delicacies, it is merely heated for a moment over a quick flame, garnished with a dab of butter and a sprig of parsley, and it is ready to serve. Such is the efficiency of our train service and of too many of our tourist hotels.

'Last call for dinner in the dining car,' a colored brother sings out, and we rise and go to the shearing. 'Now don't make a scene,' my wife tells me as we make our way through the train. 'Remember we are traveling for pleasure.' Am I likely to forget it? And that reminds me of a story.

We live simply at Oak Knoll, but we usually employ a mechanic whom we call a butler. Now sometimes, as will happen in the best of houses, a riot takes place in the kitchen and someone is fired or leaves — in a hurry. These things will happen, but my wife is equal to any emergency. Once upon a time we were having a dinner party, not a swagger affair, but a dinner; and, a few hours before, our butler quit the house. So did my wife; she took the car (we live in the country), went to town, and a few hours later came home with a large colored gentleman of very distinguished appearance. Our guests arrived in due course, and any trepidation the hostess may have felt was well concealed. She thought it well, however, to glance into the dining room before dinner was announced. All seemed in perfect order; the silver shone and the candles were lit. 'Now, George,' she said, 'I'll go into the library and in about a minute you come in and announce dinner.' 'Yessum, yessum,' was the reply. My wife went in and waited, but only for an instant. Thereupon the door opened and our new butler, looking like a colored Archbishop of Canterbury, announced in stentorian voice, 'Dinner is now being served in the dining car.' There was one loud shriek of laughter, — which lasted through the whole dinner, — and that party was, I think, one of the most successful we ever gave.

'A good dinner lubricates business,' said Dr. Johnson, and laughter, however caused, lubricates a dinner almost as much as wine, which in these degenerate days is hard to come upon — with safety.

VII

Mrs. Basil Hall in her *American Pleasure Tour*, taken in 1825, Mrs. Trollope (Anthony's mother) in her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), Charles Dickens in his *American Notes* (1842), all make the same comment, that we Americans have no conversation, that we take no joy in life. They say, all of them, that we have good intentions, but that we are deadly dull. We are; time has not greatly changed us. If we no longer use knives for forks and no longer use forks to pick our teeth with, we are, indeed, a dreary lot. 'Mamma, you order,' says the head of the family, handing his wife a menu; whereupon he subsides, eats what is put before him, pays for it, lights a cigar or a cigarette, and stalks away from the table.

A foreigner, if one comes to your table at a hotel, and frequently on a train, will make a little bow and exchange a word; if it is well received, conversation follows, perhaps a discussion. A story is told of three men, apparently strangers, meeting by chance at a hotel table in France. They engage in conversation; presently it becomes animated, intense. Voices are raised, a quarrel seems imminent. An onlooker thinks it well to call a head waiter and suggests that the men be separated before damage is done; but

the head waiter only smiles and says the men are discussing, in the most friendly manner, the respective merits of French, English, and German mustard.

And that reminds me of another story which always comes to mind when mustard is mentioned, even by Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*. It is a long story; I will make it as short as I can. Many years ago my wife had occasion to employ a personal maid; she had had a severe illness and wanted a maid who was strong, competent, and, if possible, amusing. Such a young woman was found in the personal servant of Madame Gadski, the opera singer, whom we then knew well. Gadski wished to secure a good position for her maid, whom I shall call Katrina, during the summer, while she, Gadski, was in Europe. Katrina was an Austrian Pole, or something; she spoke half-a-dozen languages, was the pet of all the opera singers from Caruso down, and knew what was going on in the minds of the German diplomats in Washington, for she had overheard much in the Gadski-Tauscher household. This was in the spring of 1914.

In August the war broke out; Katrina was in a blaze of excitement. She knew just what would happen: it would be a short and merry war. Germany would be in Paris in six weeks, the English were 'stupid,' and Belgium was 'silly.' The result of the first battles of the Marne shook her considerably, but not for long. Germany was prepared for even such a disaster; the defeat of France would be all the more crushing on account of its being delayed. Then England! To mention England was like waving a red flag at the proverbial bull. And I mentioned England pretty constantly. Finally, late in the autumn, by hook and crook, the Gadski-Tauschers got into New York; Katrina went back to them, and we expected never to see or hear of her again. Have I made it clear that she was very intelligent and witty, handsome withal? We missed her greatly.

Eighteen months passed. My wife and I were spending a few weeks in New York. When I came back to our hotel, the Biltmore, one evening, my wife met me with a smile. 'Who do you think,' she said, 'is dining with us this evening? Katrina. I met her on Fifth Avenue this afternoon. She has left the Tauschers and is doing something — I don't know quite what. At any rate, she will be here at seven this evening.' I had always liked Katrina and was delighted. I had once asked her when she was going to change her name from 'Chkchsi' to some simple name like Jones, and she had sworn that she would never break her teeth against such a name as 'Yones'; maybe by this time she had done so. At about seven, Katrina appeared, looking like a very large and colorful peony. We sat together over a table in the cellar of the Biltmore from half-past seven till long after midnight; every phase and aspect of the war was discussed; high names were mentioned. The war would go on a long time; there could be but one end; when Germany lost the Marne she had lost the war.

We had dined at half-past seven; at half after midnight we were hungry again, and some cold Virginia ham was mentioned, with stout. I explained to Katrina that Virginia ham was a delicacy and with it mustard was indicated, and said I, 'Katrina, will you have American, English, French, or German mustard?' 'It makes no difference to me,' was the reply; 'the stomach is always neutral.' I often wonder what has become of Katrina; I have never seen her since that night.

'We shall be in Santa Fe in half an hour,' said the porter.

THE HUNGRY CITY

A Mayor's Experience with Unemployment

BY JOSEPH L. HEFFERNAN

I

In December 1929, when I was mayor of Youngstown,[1] I attended a conference on unemployment at Cleveland, called at the request of President Hoover. It was held at the Chamber of Commerce, under the chairmanship of Mr. Elroy J. Kulas, president of the Otis Steel Company, and was attended by public officials of northern Ohio.

Speaker after speaker told what his community would do to end the depression, and how quickly it would be done. The unemployed were to be set marching gayly back to work without an instant's delay, and the two-car garage was to be made ready for further enlargement.

When it came my turn to speak, I said rather brutally: 'This is all plain bunk. We know that our cities and counties are in debt and have bond limitations imposed by the state. If all of us were to start this minute drawing up a programme of public improvements, it would require months to get the legislation through. Why not tell the people the truth?'

After the meeting many of the officials said to me: 'Mayor, you are right. There is n't much we can do. But we have to go along, don't we?'

Five months later I went to Germany and visited a number of cities. Everywhere I saw that the German people were in a bad way. On returning home, I made a public statement that Germany was on the verge of economic collapse, and predicted that the depression would take five years to run its course. Thereupon I asked for a bond issue of $1,000,000 for unemployment relief. Many leading business men went out of their way to show their disapproval. One of them voiced the opinion of the majority when he said to me: 'You make a bad mistake in talking about the unemployed. Don't emphasize hard times and everything will be all right.' An influential newspaper chastised me for 'borrowing trouble'; the depression would be over, the editor maintained, before relief would be needed.

Discussion dragged on for several months, and the gravity of the situation was so deliberately misrepresented by the entire business community that when the bond issue finally came to a ballot, in November 1930, it was voted down.

Thus we passed into the early days of 1931 — fourteen months after the first collapse — with no relief in sight except that which was provided by the orthodox charities. Not a single move had been made looking toward action by a united community.

[1] Mr. Heffernan was mayor for four years, from 1927 through 1931. — Editor

HV1624
K
c. 2

Westward

Newton A. Edward

Date Due			

PAMPHLET BINDERS

This is No. 1527

also carried in stock in the following sizes

	HIGH		WIDE	THICKNESS
1523	9	inches	7	inches ½ inch
1524	10	"	7	" "
1525	9	"	6	" "
1526	9¾	"	7⅛	" "
1527	10½	"	7⅜	" "
1528	11	"	8	" "

	HIGH		WIDE	THICKNESS
1529	12	inches	10	inches ½ inch
1530	12	"	9⅛	" "
1932	13	"	10	" "
1933	14	"	11	" "
1934	16	"	12	" "

Other sizes made to order.

MANUFACTURED BY

LIBRARY BUREAU

REMINGTON RAND

DIVISION OF SPERRY RAND CORPORATION